

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of 1John

Chapter 2- John's Declaration **1John1:1-4**

12. The Person of Jesus Christ Part 8

WAOY Friday/Monday 04/20-23/07; WOSM Friday 10/10/08; WOSM Tuesday 10/18/22

Welcome again, my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of 1John and today we are going to begin to at “The Declaration of the Apostle John” as listed in **1John 1:1-4-** so let's read those verses together.

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —

2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Now on the last broadcast, we were exploring just *why* John went to such great lengths in these first four verses to describe his *own personal* contact with Jesus by discussing the heresy of Gnosticism that attacked the Church late in the first century and which still plagues the church today.

We need to remember that to a Gnostic- Salvation was not about repenting and having your sins washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ. No, the Gnostics taught that Salvation was nothing more than receiving “secret knowledge” that had been hidden in codes and cryptically placed where only the so-called “enlightened ones” could find it.

The Gnostics waged war against the Scriptures and against the Deity of Jesus Christ. And this is why the Mormons, and the Christian Scientists all say today that the real key to understanding Truth is through *their* books which they say hold the “true way” to see the light

and *not* through the inspired Words of Scripture. And since both Mormonism and Christian Science are modern day manifestations of Gnosticism, they continue the Gnostic heresy that changes how people look at Jesus. So, they re-define Biblical terms and they attack Jesus' Deity; His sinless life; His Virgin birth; His Resurrection and so on, just as Jude said that they would.

Now one of the classic ways in which the Gnostics attack the authenticity of the Bible is by twisting the history of how we got our Bible. The Gnostics falsely teach that there was mass confusion and controversy in the early Church about which books to include in the canon. But that statement is simply flat out wrong. There was not much confusion about which New Testament writings to include at all. There was much confusion however among the Gnostics about the New Testament writings because they didn't like *any* of them- especially anything that John had written.

But because the Gnostics have been successful through the years in casting great doubt among people about the Bible- you need to know that contrary to what the Gnostics teach about this- there was tremendous *unity* among the early believers about the New Testament writings and there was practically unanimous unity about those writings which dealt with the Christian Doctrines about Christ's Deity and about Salvation by Faith alone. So their claim about great confusion in the early Church about the Bible is simply not true.

We must understand that all Gnostic books were written *after* the books of the Bible were written. No New Testament writing was written after the Gnostics wrote their books. And here is another interesting thing to remember when dealing with ancient writings. We must understand that just because something is old or ancient does not make it true or reliable or inspired by God. There were liars back then just like there are liars today. People wrote fiction books 5,000 years ago, just like they write then today. People slandered other people in writing just like they do today. People forged documents and plagiarized back then just like they do today. All the evil in men's hearts that is manifested today was manifested then.

The 66 Books of the English Holy Bible that we have today are a very reliable and trustworthy copy of the original autographs of the men who actually wrote God breathed Words down. So, in spite of what the Gnostics teach- You can trust your Bible.

Now it is true that we do not have any of the original autographs today. That means that all Bibles that exist today are copies of those original autographs. But they are reliable and trustworthy copies and, in the case of the Old Testament, were in print and circulated all over the world 200 years before Christ was born. So, there is no possibility for anyone to change a modern copy without someone knowing it.

And it is also true that the Bible was not originally written in English- it was written in Hebrew Aramaic and Greek. Therefore- all English Bibles are in fact not only *copies* but *translations* of the original languages. But again- that is not a problem either- because those original languages are still being taught in many of our finest Theological Seminaries and no one can change one word without someone else finding out about it.

But since it is true that all English Bibles are translations- we must acknowledge that all English translations contain translation *difficulties*. And these difficulties are not attempts at deceiving people but are simply human attempts at translating ancient languages into English.

The good news about all of those translation difficulties is that first of all- we know where all of them are. Secondly, those translation difficulties do not involve any Doctrine or teaching and thirdly- they are all easily overcome- even to the casual reader- by employing the sound rules of Biblical interpretation. And since any proper study of the Bible consists of language and Word evaluations anyway- practically all of the English translations are acceptable and very reliable.

I personally prefer the New American Standard Version or the English Standard Version. My other choices second choice would be the Holman Christian Standard Version the New King James Version and the King James. Sadly, over the last several years- the publishing company, Zondervan, has chosen to go down a secular and liberal road in removing all male references of God out of their revised New International; Version so I cannot in good faith recommend the NIV to anyone. So even though the NIV is easier to read than the King James- it is a paraphrase and not a true translation and therefore shouldn't be used for serious study anyway. But whichever English version you choose- here is the bottom line- read it; study it; love what it says and live how it teaches.

The Gnostics and other heretics always try to capitalize on the

fact that most people today do not know or study or understand Church history, and therefore most people do not understand how we got our Bible and what process the early Church went through to arrive at 66 inspired Books. So, Gnostics and others capitalize on that ignorance and they sow seeds of doubt in the hearts and minds of people about the Bible. Beloved, you need to know about the Bible, so I want to commend an excellent book on this subject that will answer any and all your questions. It is a book entitled, *The Canon of Scripture*, by F.F. Bruce. This and many other books will relieve your mind as to the claim by the Gnostics that we cannot trust the Bible.

Just like we have today- there were some in the early Church who wanted to simply blend Christianity with Gnosticism. You see, it is a very popular trend today for people to view any struggle over Doctrine to be wrong and it is common today to hear people say that it really doesn't matter what someone thinks or believes as long as they sincerely believe it and love Jesus.

The problem with that kind of appeasement is that unless we know who Jesus is- we cannot love Him or worship Him or even serve Him properly. Service, worship, and obedience is always the result of knowledge. So, if you do not correctly know Jesus- you cannot correctly worship, serve, or obey Him. And so, if you do not read and study the Bible or if you are filling your mind with teachings that are false- how do you know if you are following Jesus or not?

The Gnostics didn't believe that Jesus was a real person. They taught that Jesus was only a spiritual "concept" that was hidden in secret codes in the writings of the Gnostic mystics. So, you can see how this presented a real problem for those who wanted to have peace with everyone at the expense of Truth.

So, the question back then was the same as it is today- precisely how do we love Jesus if He didn't exist? Thank God that the Apostle John had the courage and the backbone to step up to the plate and reject the heresy of the Gnostics. Look at what God inspired John to write to the Church about the Gnostics in **2John 9-11**:

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

John was not like the appeasers of his day or ours and John clearly taught that if anyone does not stay pure and faithful to the Doctrine of the Apostles- then that person does not know God at all. And John clearly warned the people of the Church that since the teaching of the Gnostics was so evil and so perverse and so contrary to inspired Scripture that they were not to entertain the Gnostics, nor invite them into their homes, nor give them a traveling blessing.

Now even though Gnosticism is a complicated web of pagan teachings, there are three main branches of Gnosticism that I want to go over very briefly:

1. Dualism
2. Syncretism
3. Docetism

Dualism

Dualism is the branch of Gnosticism made famous by the movie, *Star Wars*. Dualism teaches that there is a “force” that is the opposite of God and is the equal of God- the “dark side” if you will. Dualists believe that evil always existed from eternity past and that evil will always exist as an opposite- but parallel force to good.

Dualism is a serious error and a departure from Biblical Christianity on a number of fronts. First of all- evil did *not* always exist. There was a point in time when evil came into being. It is important to know that God did not *create* evil- but He knew about it, and He *allowed* it. Now exactly *why* God allowed evil is a mystery to us that will only be answered in eternity. But suffice it to say that God existed in fullness well before evil was ever manifested. Secondly, evil will come to an end one day. So, there is a point in time when evil began and there will be a moment in time when evil ceases to exist- but God is eternal. And the point here is that while evil is terrible- it is not equal with God- it is entirely inferior to God both in its origin and in its destruction.

So, Christianity is not now and never has been “dualistic” because first of all, evil didn’t always exist and second, evil will not always exist. Evil began with lucifer’s rebellion in heaven and will end when Christ will rule and reign from the New Jerusalem and satan is cast into the lake of fire. Christianity is not dualistic thirdly because whatever power satan may have now- he is no match at all for God. At best, satan is a fallen angel. Now granted, satan may have more power than a common man in the sense that he is not subject to the laws of gravity and is a spirit being and is immortal- but God Almighty is Omnipotent and Sovereign, and angels are not.

It is a dualistic teaching that says that God is locked in some titanic life and death struggle with satan with man in the center- where sometimes God wins and other times satan wins. That may make for a good movie plot- but it is simply not the case. God is always Supreme; always victorious; and always on top. God never loses any battle; He never comes in second; never needs to regroup; and never needs to ask anyone for anything. God is never nervous; He never is bewildered and Almighty God is always sure; always right; and always faithful.

The Bible is clear about God- God is Sovereign. He is Sovereign in Creation; He is Sovereign in Salvation; and He is Sovereign over all the earth and everything that is made. The Bible says that God is in charge of all things. The Bible says that God is Sovereign. The Bible says that Man is a pathetic lost soul- who is completely and utterly and totally depraved and the only hope for man is not to develop more technology- but to be washed in the shed Blood of the Lamb of God and satan is a fallen angel who will one day be thrown into the lake of fire.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our “journey” through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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